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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SANAA 001150

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [YE](#) [DOMESTIC](#) [POLITICS](#)

SUBJECT: YEMEN'S NEW GOVERNMENT: NEW BLOOD, MODEST REFORM,
EMPHASIS ON TECHNOLOGY

Classified By: DCM ALAN MISENHEIMER FOR REASON 1.5 (D) ,

Summary

[11](#). (C): Begin Summary: ROYG Prime Minister Ba Jammal's new Cabinet (complete list para 12) introduces several fresh faces, but incumbents retain the major ministries and all Ministers are members of the General People's Congress (GPC). At a glance:

- By relative population, the South (10 Ministers) outweighs the North (25 Ministers) and scores important portfolios for junior technocrats.
- The average age drops, ten Ministers are Members of Parliament, purely tribal/family influence has waned and education levels are high.
- Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Ahmed Sofan wins the added title of Deputy Prime Minister.
- The sole female Minister takes her female predecessor's portfolio, but is moved up to full Minister.
- Some former Ministers with poor records are dismissed; others with marginal reputations remain.

[12](#). (C) The new Cabinet is ready for business and tasked with reform. It should perform adequately. However, by limiting Ministers to GPC party stalwarts, and selecting only one woman for the Cabinet, Prime Minister Ba Jammal seems to have aimed for business as usual over bold change. End Summary

Fifty Percent Turnover

[13](#). (U) On May 17, ROYG President Ali Abdullah Salih approved the new Cabinet presented by incumbent Prime Minister Abdul Qadir Ba Jammal. The list includes 15 new ministers (and two former ministers with new portfolios) in a total Cabinet of 35, a near fifty percent replacement rate. However, the most important Ministries are unchanged: Alawi Saleh Al-Salami as Deputy Prime Minister/Finance Minister, Abubakir Abdullah al-Qirbi in Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Alaywah in Defense, Rashad al-Alimi in Interior and Ahmed Mohammed Sofan as Minister of Planning and International Cooperation.

Minister of Planning Promoted

[14](#). (C) The most important change from the Embassy's perspective may be Ahmed Sofan's promotion to Deputy Prime Minister, retaining his portfolio as Minister of Planning and International Cooperation (no longer "Planning and Development".) Some observers believe the Prime Minister needs him as a counterweight to the powerful Finance Minister, Alawi Saleh al-Salami, who reigned as sole Deputy Prime Minister in the previous cabinet. Comment: While al-Salami gets good marks from the World Bank and others for his strict monetary policy, he has been less effective in advancing business and development. In contrast, Sofan, a successful businessman by background, has made his planning and development portfolio a center for long-term investments in Yemen's social and human resources. End Comment

The South Keeps Its Edge

[15](#). (U) The North/South tally of cabinet seats (25/10) is still tipped toward Aden by relative population (approximately 16 million to four million.) In addition, several new Cabinet Ministers have portfolios that reflect the long-standing Southern edge in education and international business. The new Ministers of Justice, Transportation, Fisheries, Industry, Higher Education and Technical Education have impressive credentials as Southern technocrats.

DEMOGRAPHICS

[16](#). (U) The average age of the Cabinet has declined, with two young Ministers and no elder statesmen. For example, the new Ministers of both Justice and Agriculture are thirty-four, but most Ministers weigh in with solid forties and fifties. In a sign of growing technocracy, 12 Ministers have PhD's and seven have MA's. Only four Ministers come from wealthy commercial families and only three have important tribal standing. The single woman member is a notable Cabinet

standout. Former Ambassador to the Netherlands Amat al-Alim al-Soswah takes the designated female portfolio of Human Rights, but as a concession to her public stature, she was elevated to full Minister, rather than Minister of State.

New Stars For The Party?

17. (U) Ten Ministers are Members of Parliament, including seven impressive first-time winners in the recent elections. Sanaa's mayor, Ahmed al-Kohlani, Minister of State without Portfolio, may be the most outstanding, given his effective administrative record. His tribal connections, while important, may be less of a factor than his high popularity in the capital city.

18. (U) The new Ministers of Agriculture, Justice, Transport and Civil Service also shine as freshman Parliamentarians. They all showed electoral prowess, and now have the fortune to replace marginally effective former Ministers. The GPC will mark these new party stars for bright futures if they can manage their first portfolios more successfully than their predecessors.

COMMENT

19. (U) Yemen is changing, and even such establishment institutions as the Cabinet are beginning to reflect more important priorities than tribal and regional preferences. For example, the distinction between North and South may gradually be losing its importance as groups begin to align by common interests and issues: political parties; business; religion; reform.

110. (C) Ba Jammal could and should have nominated a number of well-qualified female Ministers. However, his sole choice is a good one. She may help pave the way for more representative government in the future. The Cabinet's educated young technocrats have impressive credentials and should be able to conduct public business with more credibility than their predecessors. By ridding himself of deadwood (like the former Education Minister) Ba Jammal should accomplish more in his second term.

111. (C) The GPC's landslide victory in the recent elections, although hampered by losses in Sanaa and tarnished by controversy over vote-counting in some districts, gives the government a solid mandate for its programs. The GPC must now show the public that it heard the electorate's clear calls for government reform. Ba Jammal seems to have split the difference - continuity in the power ministries but significant change elsewhere. End Comment

112. Complete List of New Cabinet Members

PRIME MINISTER - Abdul-Qadir Abdul-Rahman Ba Jammal

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FINANCE MINISTER - Alawi Saleh al-Salami

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF PLANNING & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION - Ahmed Mohammed Sofan

AGRICULTURE & IRRIGATION - Engineer Hasan Omer Mohammed Sowaid

AWQAF & RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE - Hamoud Mohammed Obad

CIVIL SERVICE & SOCIAL SECURITY - Hamoud Khaled Naji al-Soufi

COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - Engineer Abdul-Malik al-Mu'allimi

CULTURE & TOURISM - Khaled Abdullah Slaih al-Rowaishan

DEFENSE - MG Abdullah Ali Alaywah

EDUCATION - Dr. Abdul-Salam Mohammed Hizam al-Jawfi

ELECTRICITY - Abdul-Rahman Mohammed Tarmom

EXPATRIATE AFFAIRS - Abduh Ali Qubati

FISHERIES - Ali Mohammed Mojawer

FOREIGN AFFAIRS - Dr. Abu-Baker Abdullah al-Qirbi

HIGHER EDUCATION & SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH - Dr. Abdu-Wahab Rawih

HUMAN RIGHTS - Amat-al-Alim al-Soswah

INDUSTRY & TRADE - Dr. Khaled Rajih Shiekh

INFORMATION - Hussein Dhaifallah al-Awadhi

INTERIOR - Dr. Rashad al-Alimi

JUSTICE - Dr. Adnan Omer Mohammed al-Jefri

LEGAL AFFAIRS - Dr. Rashad Ahmed Yahia al-Rassas

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION - Sadiq Ameen Abu-Rass

OIL & MINERALS - Dr. Rashid Salih Ba Rabba

PUBLIC HEALTH & POPULATION - Dr. Mohammed Yahia Awadh
al-No,emi

PUBLIC WORK & ROADS - Engineer Abdullah Hussein al-Daf,ei

SOCIAL AFFAIRS & LABOR - Abdul-Karim al-Arhabi

TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - Dr. Ali Mansour Mohammed
Bin Safaa

TRANSPORT - Omer Muhsen Abdul-Rahman al-Amoudi

WATER & ENVIRONMENT - Dr. Mohammed Lutf Mohammed al-Iriani

YOUTH & SPORT - Abdul-Rahamn al-Akwa

MINISTER OF STATE & SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY - MG

Engineer Abdullah Hussein al-Bashiri

MINISTER OF STATE & MEMBER OF THE CABINET - Qassim Ahmed
al-Ajam

MINISTER OF STATE & MEMBER OF THE CABINET - Mohammed Ali
Yasir

MINISTER OF STATE & MAYOR OF SANAA - Ahmed Mohammed Yahia
al-Kohlani

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PALIAMENTARY AND SHURA COUNCIL AFFAIRS

-Mohammed Yahia Hamoud al-Sharafi

HULL